THE GENDER GAP THROUGH SOCIOLOGICAL LENSES

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Context:

- project: Teaching in the Bed of Procrustes (started January 2012)

- to be presented:
  - official data of Flemish Department of Education
  - findings from previous research mainly based on the Flemish Educational Assessment (FLEA):
    gathered in 2004-2005
    11872 students – 6081 year 3 (grade 2 year 1)
    – 5791 year 5 (grade 3 year 1)
    in 85 secondary schools
  - Procrustes-data
Primary education – school population (%)
Primary and secondary education
Leeway by grade and gender 2010-2011 (%)
Primary and secondary education
Retention by grade and gender 2010-2011 (%)
Observation:

Differences turn up in secondary education and increase

Sociological explanation?

- adolescent identity development
  - masculine / feminine identity
  - doing gender
  - ‘macho’ culture defining studying as feminine (sissies)

- adolescent subcultures :
  - (heteroseksual) popularity source of youngsters’ status
  - but what makes someone popular?
    → achievement does not (cf. Coleman)
moreover:

peergroup / popularity: difference between boys & girls

→ gender specific youth cultures

study oriented girls culture
less study oriented boys culture

→ study culture determines performance - socialisation
- social pressure

→ especially impact on boys

girls: interpersonal relationships
boys: group, image, ‘cool’
Secondary education:
Study involvement by gender and track
(2004-2005, N = 11,872, 85 schools)
Secondary education:
Counter-school indicators by gender
(2004-2005, N = 11,872, 85 schools)
Strategies used at school:
- boys: “effortless attainment” (defensive strategy, protection)
- girls: flexible and low profile in mixed schools

Finding:
when proportion girls ↑
→ boys’ and girls’ study involvement ↑
→ boys’ and girls’ school misconduct ↓
→ boys’ and girls’ achievement ↑
Academic achievement
1999-2000

Mean GPA

- boys
- girls

third year
fourth year

mixed
segregated
Teachers
- interaction → boys: more contact and feedback
  more control and discipline
- expectancies → girls: higher normative expectations
  higher cognitive expectations
  higher trust
Gender gap → average differences

Intrasexual variation!

→ Various profiles within boys and girls

Questions:
- How are these related to performance and achievement?
- Are these related to sociodemographic features? (intersectionality)
- Are these related to certain school features?
TGRI = traditional gender role ideology
DRUK = pressure for gender conformity
GETY = gender typicality

HOFO = homonegative
SOIN = social integration
Fig. 1. Association between sex, gender identity and academic self-efficacy.
Secondary education: Aspirations by gender
(2004-2005, N = 11,872, 85 schools)
Secondary education:
School population grade 3 by gender and track (%)
2010-2011
Higher education: enrollment 2010-2011 by gender (%)
Percentage men and women in various fields of study in bachelor-years at Ghent University (2011-2012)
Conclusion

- gender gap also in Flanders
- manifests itself especially in secondary education
  * identity development in adolescence
  * adolescent subcultures
  * teachers
- consequences for higher education in terms of enrolment
- however: - women still the minority at highest levels (doc)
  - horizontal gender segregation in secondary and tertiary ed
References:


